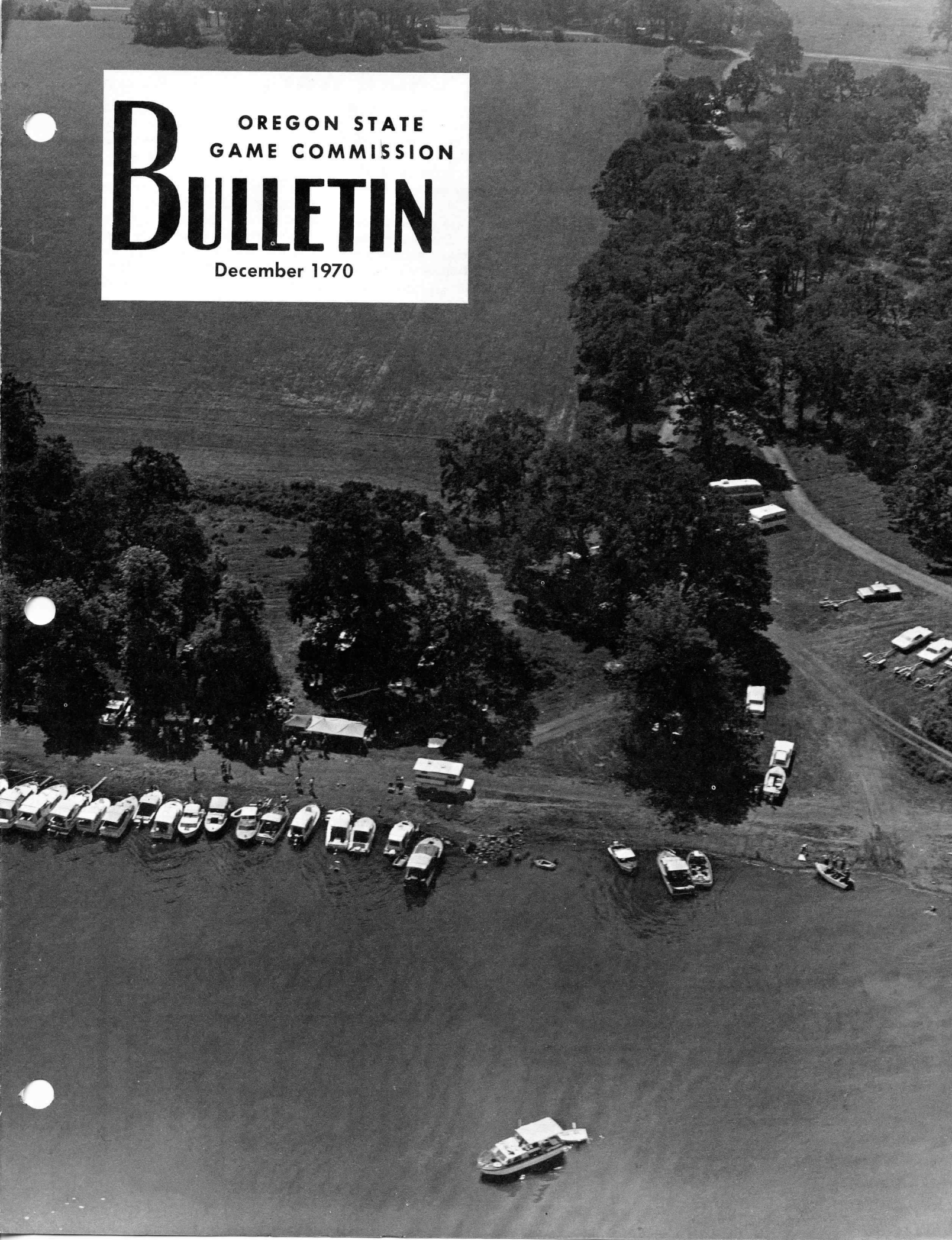


BULLETIN

OREGON STATE
GAME COMMISSION

December 1970



OREGON STATE GAME COMMISSION BULLETIN

Volume 25, Number 12
December 1970

RON E. SHAY, Editor
H. C. SMITH, Staff Artist
A. L. MILLER, Photographer

Published Monthly by the
OREGON STATE GAME COMMISSION
1634 S.W. Alder Street — P.O. Box 3503
Portland, Oregon 97208

JOHN W. McKEAN, Director

MEMBERS OF COMMISSION

George L. Hibbard, Chairman.....Oregon City
John P. Amacher, Vice-chairman.....Winchester
J. Daniel Callaghan.....Salem
J. Pat Metke.....Bend
James W. Whittaker.....Pilot Rock

Permission to reprint is granted provided proper credit is given.

Second-class postage paid at Portland, Oregon.

Please report promptly any change of address. Send in address label from a recent issue with notice of change. Include zip code number. Bulletin is circulated free of charge.

The Cover

Game Commission lands acquired for waterfowl and game management are attracting increasing numbers of recreationists—in some cases to the detriment of the area. See feature article.
Photo by Al Miller

HUNTER SAFETY TRAINING PROGRAM

Instructors Approved

Month of October	44
Total to Date	1,986

Students Trained

Month of October	4,167
Total to Date	162,843

Firearms Casualties Reported in 1970

Fatal	2
Nonfatal	35

ELK STUDY UNDER WAY

Big game hunters are asked to lend their cooperation in two areas of north-eastern Oregon in an effort to unravel some facts about Oregon's elk herds. The studies are joint ventures by the Game Commission and the U. S. Forest Service.

The investigations are aimed at determining what effects changes in habitat, roads and human harassment have on the distribution of elk herds.

The areas involved are the Chesnimnus Unit in Wallowa County and the Bobsled Ridge area in Umatilla County. The latter area lies north of Black Mountain between the main Umatilla River and the Umatilla South Fork. The Chesnimnus work will be of relatively short range while research on Bobsled Ridge will go through 1977, at least.

Intensive timber management in the Chesnimnus has resulted in significant changes in wildlife habitat with road access to almost all parts of the unit. This year all hunters entering the Chesnimnus Unit were checked out of the area to secure more precise information on hunter movement as well as movement of the elk herds. Before the season next year a thorough census of elk and their distribution will be made.

Hunters will face the most important part of the study during the 1971-72 elk seasons when it will be necessary to close selected roads to vehicle travel. Road closures are necessary if the effects of roads and human harassment are to be determined. Many secondary and spur roads will be closed to travel except to hunters on foot. The closures must be strictly enforced if the study is to be successful and the cooperation of hunters in this regard is essential.

A phase of the study involves capturing and marking some Chesnimnus elk with neck collars to check on ani-

mal movement, distribution, and to gather other biological data. Hunters are asked to report the location, collar number, and the date of any tagged elk observed.

One way to find out if environmental changes, roads, and human harassment have an impact on elk is to carefully study the animals in a roadless and undisturbed area, then disturb it and study the same elk in the altered environment. That's exactly what research biologists will do in the Bobsled Ridge area. The ridge top contains about 5,000 acres on which an estimated 400 elk summer. The animals winter in the canyon bottoms.

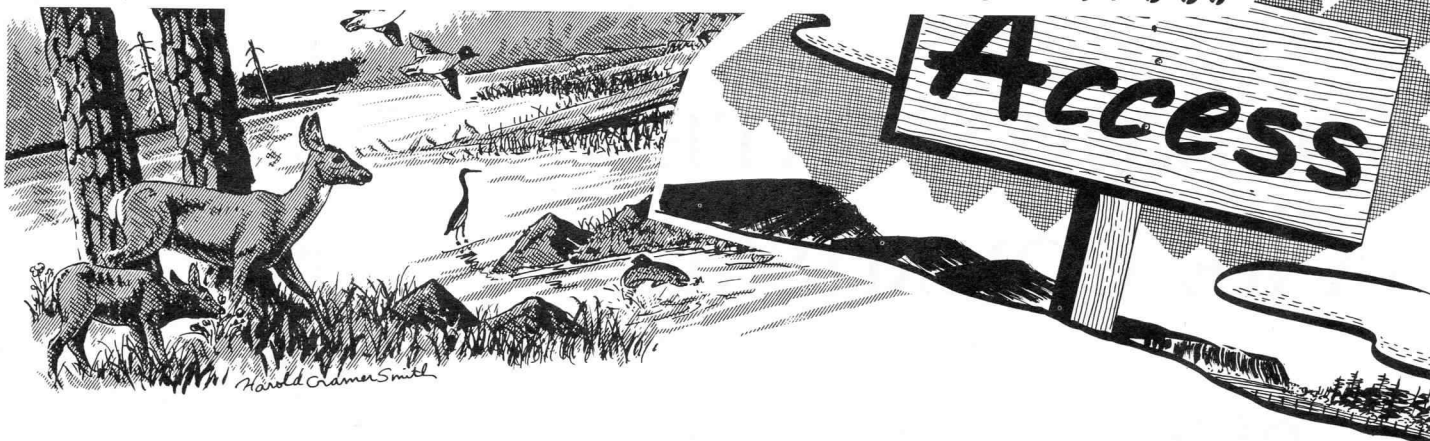
Bobsled Ridge is presently unlogged and unroaded and elk live here in relative isolation. The only harassment at present is by those hunters who pack into the area or who hunt the perimeters. Cow elk in the Bobsled Ridge herd will be live-trapped and fitted with radio transmitters attached to a special collar. The radios—tiny transmitters about the size of a fountain pen and powered by compact batteries—will transmit a continuous signal and make it possible to precisely monitor each animal's movements.

In 1973, timber will be harvested from the south half of Bobsled Ridge and in 1975 from the north half. By studying the elk and their habitat before, during, and after logging and road building, research workers hope to come up with some valid answers.

The two studies seek information on the same problem—the effects intensive logging, road building, and human harassment have on elk herds—although the approach is from opposite directions. The design at Bobsled Ridge is to study an undisturbed area, disturb it, and measure the effects. The design in the Chesnimnus Unit is to study a disturbed area, leave it alone as much as possible, and measure the effects.



WE PAY TAXES TOO !.....



By MEL S. CUMMINGS, Lands Supervisor

If you contributed to the welfare of your community by buying a large warehouse to shelter many local people who had no place to live, how would you feel when you received your tax statement and found your taxes had doubled because your warehouse was now taxed as a hotel? The Game Commission is in this situation in many areas. It has purchased agricultural and other lands to maintain fish and wildlife populations and to provide hunting, fishing and many other forms of recreation for Oregon citizens. Although they are still farmed by the Game Commission, some areas have been reclassified by

the counties from agricultural or farm use lands to recreational lands which gives them a much higher appraised value. Vicinage sales for residential and industrial purposes also influence assessed values on other game management areas.

The Game Commission was created by the State Legislature to maintain and manage the state's game fish and wildlife. Competing demands for land in the early 1940s made it apparent that wildlife populations could not be maintained if certain key areas were destroyed. Subsequently the Commission started purchasing and developing areas having high wildlife poten-

tials. No taxes were paid on these lands. Big game winter ranges, waterfowl management areas, upland game habitat, fishing access sites and lands suitable for fishing impoundments were considered for acquisition.

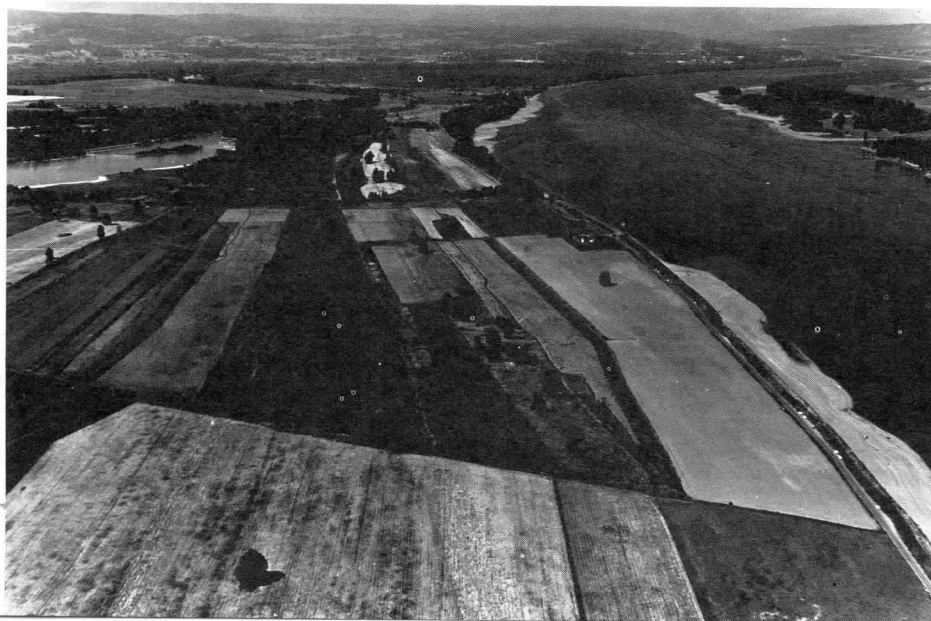
The Commission realized the counties where lands were purchased for wildlife were losing tax revenue necessary for schools and other county services. Consequently the Commission, in 1947, **asked the legislature to grant authority to pay the equivalent of property taxes.** The intent was to share the cost of schools and other services and to pay on the same basis as other rural landowners. The legislature gave the Commission this authority and further stated no taxes would be paid on game farms, fish hatcheries, office quarters, capital improvements and certain acquired military lands.

The Game Commission is the only state agency that has requested such an arrangement and pays "in lieu of taxes" moneys to the counties.

The Game Commission has purchased about 69 thousand acres of various types of land. Just over 63 thousand of these acres are within eleven big game, waterfowl, and upland game bird management areas. An additional 33 thousand acres under leases and agreements with other state and federal agencies and private landowners are managed for wildlife. Payments in lieu of taxes are paid on over 66 thousand acres.

(continued page 6)

Sauvie Island Game Management Area was purchased with funds provided by the hunters and is farmed to provide waterfowl hunting and refuge area. However, only about 4 percent of the use is by hunters, the remainder being enjoyed by other types of recreationists. Taxes on the land have been based on recreational use and have skyrocketed.



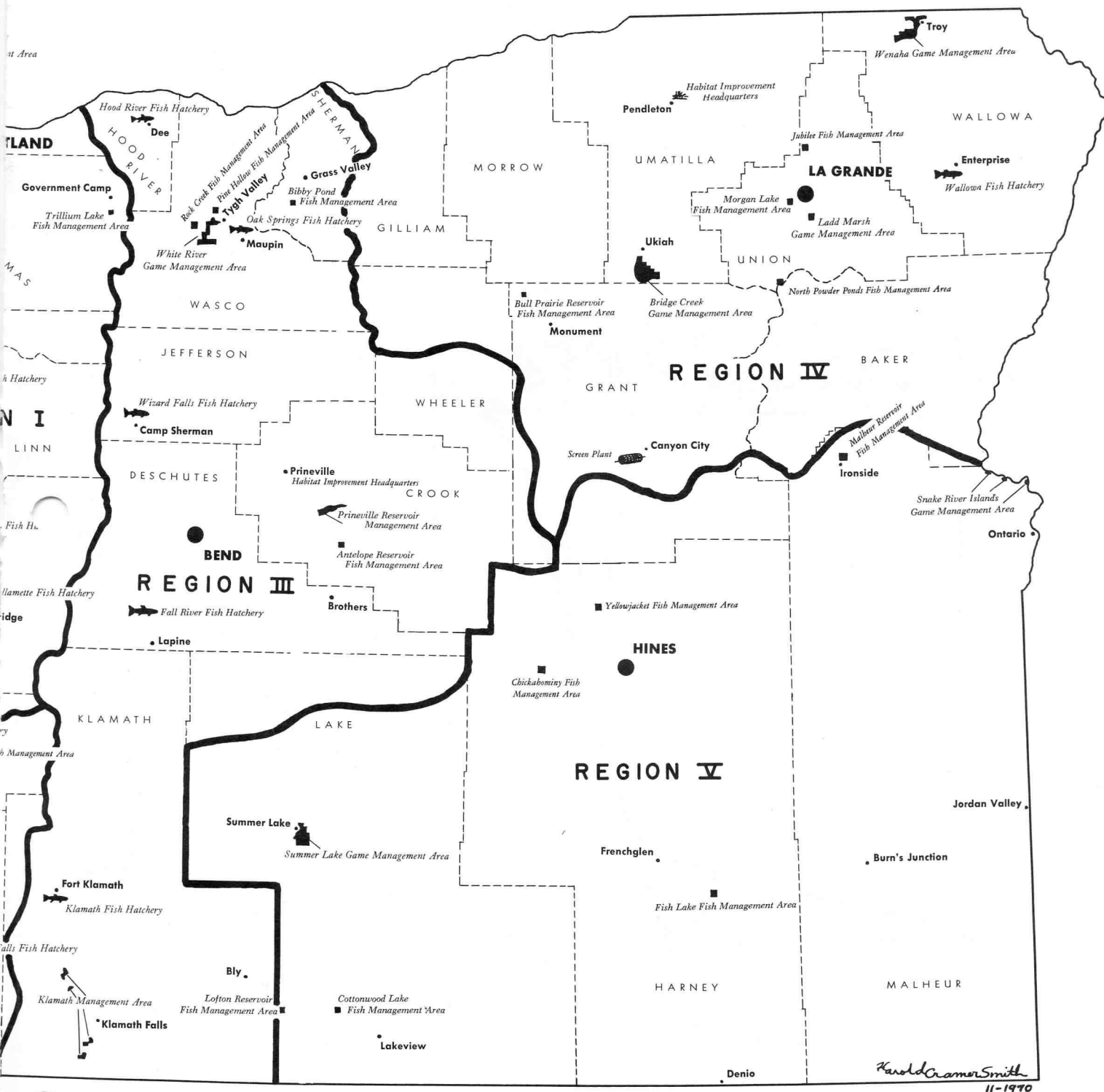
OREGON STATE GAME COMMISSION

Offices, Installations & Management Areas

Legend

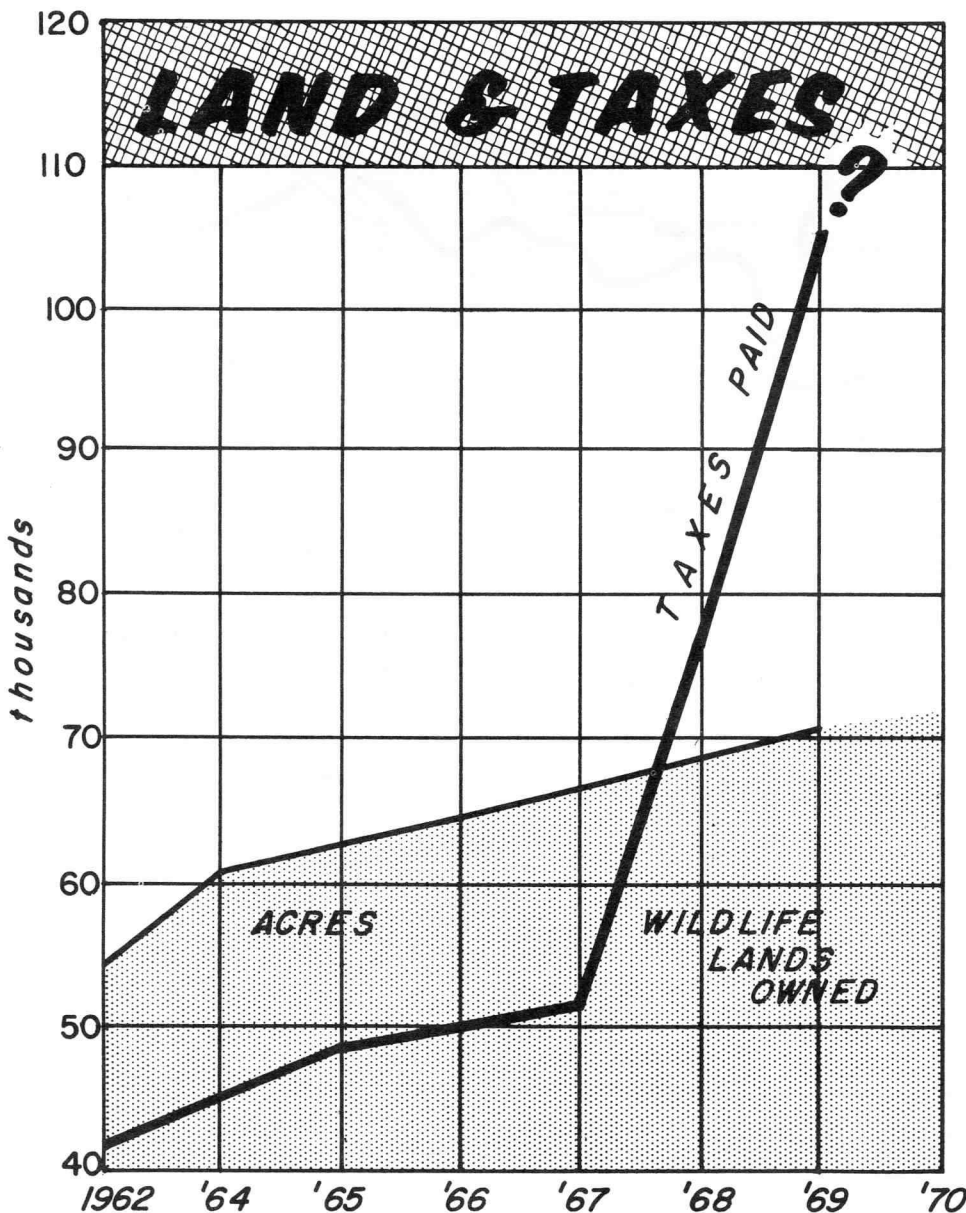
- ★ Central Office
- Regional Office
- Regional Boundaries
- 🐟 Fish Hatcheries
- 🦅 Game Farms
- 🌿 Screen Plants
- Fish Management Areas
- 🏠 Game Management Areas
- Ft. Klamath (Nearest town shown to permanent installations)
- 🐟* Rearing Pond





TAXABLE WILDLIFE LANDS OWNED BY COMMISSION

Type	Number	Acres
Big Game Management Areas	4	34,600
Waterfowl Management Areas	5	27,500
Upland Game Management Areas	2	500
Fish Access and Management Areas	161	3,100
Wildlife Lands	3	900
		<hr/> 66,600



TAXES

(continued)

Tax payments to the counties increased at a normal rate until 1967. About then demands in urban areas for residential, industrial and recreational lands forced agricultural land prices far above farm use values. Sauvie Island, the Commission's wildlife management area in Multnomah and Columbia Counties adjacent to Portland, was the first area to reflect this increase. Payments on that project jumped from \$18,256 in 1966 to \$57,185 in 1969. The 1969 appraised value of 6,855 acres in one of these counties was \$1,037,000. In 1970 the appraised value nearly doubled to \$1,934,000. Similar appraisals and assessments are starting to come from counties east of the Cascades. This year one county in eastern Oregon raised the assessed value of 640 acres of sagebrush from 15 to 25 dollars per acre. Surrounding private lands with the same grazing use are still appraised at 15 dollars an acre.

Now let's get back to the warehouse you purchased to shelter the needy in your community. You may have shrugged off the doubling of taxes caused by the reappraisal of your warehouse as a hotel if the homeless people you bought it for were enjoying all the benefits. But how would you feel if 96 percent of those taking advantage of your shelter were not the ones you had purchased it for? The Game Commission is in this situation too. Its responsibility is to provide hunting and fishing. However, a survey to determine who was using the Sauvie Island Game Management Area showed this project provided approximately 300 thousand man-days of picnicking, boating, sight-seeing, berry-picking, fishing, hunting, and other outdoor recreation for anyone wishing to visit the area. The area was purchased for wildlife and hunters **with funds derived from hunting**. Yet, hunters enjoyed only 12 thousand of the 300 thousand days of recreation provided.

Now that you know your warehouse is providing a needed service for all the citizens of your community wishing to use it, don't you think you should be taxed at a rate no greater than that of other warehouse operators? You might get tax relief afforded a charitable organization. The Commission must also seek a solution if it is to achieve its objective of maintaining the fish and wildlife re-

(continued next page)

TAXES

(continued)

sources and outdoor recreation for the people of Oregon.

It is proposing legislation that will add fish access sites to the list of properties exempt from taxation. These facilities often provide more recreation for boating, water skiing, swimming, picnicking, sight-seeing, and sun bathing than they do for fishing. Fishermen, besides paying the taxes on these general recreation facilities, have spent many thousand dollars developing them for everyone's enjoyment.

Proposed legislation would also require appraisals to be on the basis of farm or forest use value. The Commission still feels it should pay for county services, but not at a greater rate than that paid by other rural property owners.

You might also receive financial aid for your charitable venture from available welfare grants. **Oregon's fish and wildlife programs are wholly depend-**

ent on sportsmen for financing. Sale of hunting and fishing licenses and tags represents about 77 percent of its revenue. Oregon sportsmen also contribute the major share of the 18 percent of the Commission's income received from federal sources through payment of a federal excise tax on certain hunting and fishing equipment. The other 5 percent comes from leases, management area permits, fines and rentals. **NO MONEY IS RECEIVED FROM THE STATE GENERAL FUND.**

When your "hotel" fills with people you can feel you have accomplished your mission. Oregon, facing an ever increasing population growth, further industrialization, and many other competing demands for the use of land and water, must continually intensify its efforts to meet increasing recreational demands. The Game Commission will find it difficult to meet its responsibilities to these demands and the wildlife resources without tax relief or funding from other sources.

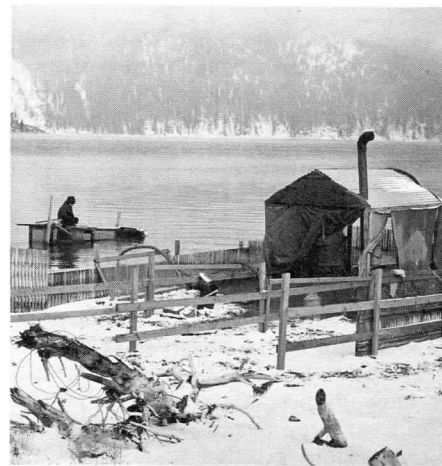
Hunters utilizing the Summer Lake Management Area. Fees paid by hunters have allowed the acquisition of such lands. In many areas of the state use by other recreationists has far surpassed hunter use while the hunter is still paying the bill. The same situation has occurred at fishing access and boat launching sites.



BROOK TROUT EGG-TAKE COMPLETE

Biologists and fish hatchery personnel of the Game Commission battled winter elements of deep snow, blizzards, freezing rain squalls, and other adverse weather conditions in the annual egg-taking operation for brook trout. Eggs were taken from wild stocks captured at East Lake high in the Paulina Mountains of central Oregon. Personnel plowed through more than a foot of snow just to get there, then were hampered by winter squalls and freezing weather throughout the egg-taking period.

The big brook trout, most running 12 to 16 or more inches in length, are captured by trap net, then held in holding pens until egg-taking is complete. Fertilized eggs are transferred to the Commission's Fall River Fish Hatchery where they will develop into fingerling brooks for planting the high lakes next summer. More than 4,000,000 eggs were taken from the captured brood stocks this year. Spawning-out adults are returned to East Lake where they will provide a ready challenge to sport fishermen next year.



To insure achieving the planned egg quota, Commission personnel also fought the winter freezeup at Big Lava Lake on the Century Drive where traps were set to capture additional brook trout if needed.

Winter elements also hampered hatcherymen at Crescent Lake where traps were set to capture maturing kokanee, a prized game fish with anglers. Kokanee at Crescent are generally late spawners and usually of fairly large size. Some years the spawning run is large while other years there is a scarcity. This winter more than 300,000 kokanee eggs were taken. Another 1,500,000 kokanee eggs will be obtained from Montana and Colorado.

SEA OTTER SPOTTED

Oregon's sea otter, transplanted by the Game Commission from Amchitka, Alaska, to the reefs in the Port Orford area on July 18, appear to be doing fine with 14 of these interesting and valuable marine furbearers observed recently.

Chet Kebbe, Commission staff biologist, said that in late October nine sea otter were observed in the Cape Blanco kelp beds, four in the reefs off Humbug Mountain, and one in Coos Bay.

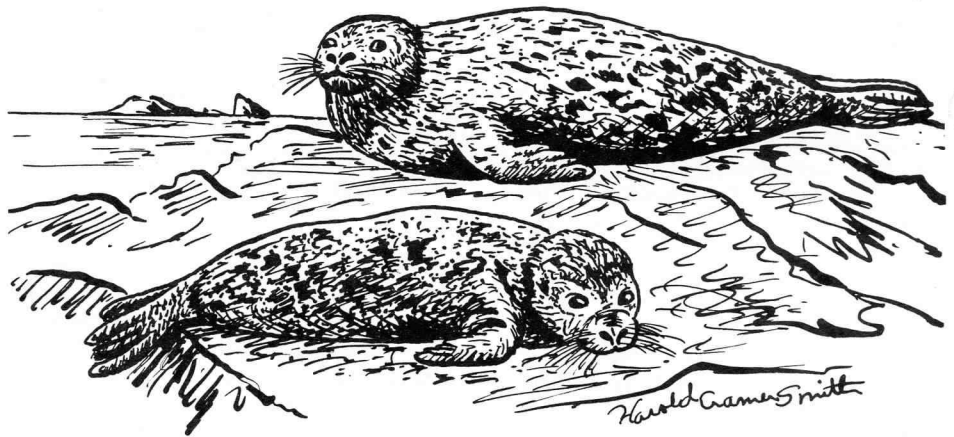
The lone otter sighted in Coos Bay is believed to be the old, grizzled female which was almost ready to whelp when brought from Alaska. However, she appeared to be injured, possibly by a shark or other predator, and there was no pup with her. All other sea otter sighted appeared healthy and in excellent condition.

The animals were observed on October 19 and 20 by Bruce Mate, marine biologist stationed at the Charleston Marine Laboratory. Mate is studying the population dynamics of seals and sea lions on the south coast of Oregon on a grant from the National Science Foundation.

In his investigations Mate spends considerable time, weather permitting, in the reefs and kelp beds in a rubber raft powered by outboard motor. The raft enables him to approach quite close to marine mammals before they become alarmed.

In the areas where the otter were observed Mate was able to watch their general movements for some time, including feeding and playing activities. In early August he observed seven sea otter—three at Humbug Mountain, two at Cape Blanco, and two at Simpson Reef near Cape Arago. He also sighted the same old grizzled female in Coos Bay.

Kebbe said that these are the first authentic sightings of the transplanted otter since shortly after their July release into the kelp beds about two miles south of Port Orford. Several helicopter flights have been made by game biologists in search of the animals but it is believed that noise from the aircraft probably sends them into hiding before observers can get within sighting range.



PACIFIC HARBOR SEAL

Phoca vitulina other common names—hair seal, common seal, spotted seal

Although not as numerous as its sea lion cousin, the harbor seal is probably the most often observed marine mammal on the Oregon coast. An expert swimmer, the harbor seal spends much of its life in the water around major coastal bays and other estuaries. This interesting seaboard dweller is never free of land, however, for seals must return to beaches, sand bars, or islands to rest and give birth to their young. The main concentrations in Oregon are on islands near Gold Beach, Coos Bay, and Cape Foulweather. The Columbia River was once thought to contain the greatest seal population but now has no year-round residents.

The seal's rounded head appears almost black against the water but closer examination reveals a bluish-gray back fading to silvery white belly. Black or brown spots and irregular white rings mark the five or six-foot length of the animal. Weight reaches 200 pounds in adults. The flippers, which correspond to the legs of most other mammals, propel the torpedo-shaped body gracefully through the water but make travel laborious and awkward on land. Sharp, pointed teeth further adapt seals for catching the fish and crustaceans that comprise their diet.

A single pup is born in late spring and follows its mother into the water almost immediately. Young grow rapidly and may double their weight in the first month but do not reach maturity until about three years of age. Mating takes place in early summer near the end of the nursing period for the previous pup.

The harbor seal has sustained considerable persecution by fisheries interests because of its reputation for damaging fishing gear and commercially valuable fish. Populations have diminished over the past years and it is estimated that only about 500 seals presently reside in Oregon waters. They have few natural enemies and the reduction of their numbers can be largely attributed to the activities of man.

ROGUE FLY FISHING RULE TO BE MODIFIED

The Game Commission has scheduled a hearing at its headquarters at S.W. 17th and Alder in Portland at 10 a.m. on December 11 to modify the recently adopted fly fishing regulation on the Rogue River, according to John McKean, game director.

The regulation adopted on Novem-

ber 7 provides for a fly fishing only season in 1971 from July 5 through October 31 from Gold Ray Dam to Laurelhurst Bridge on the Rogue. The fly fishing area has opened on August 15 for the past three years and on December 11 the Commission intends to modify the rule adopted earlier this month to return to the August 15 opening.



1634 S.W. ALDER STREET
P.O. BOX 3503
PORTLAND, OREGON 97208